

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
94 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
0	510



City Lexington
Address 4 Bennington Road
Historic Name Thomas Cunningham Sias
House

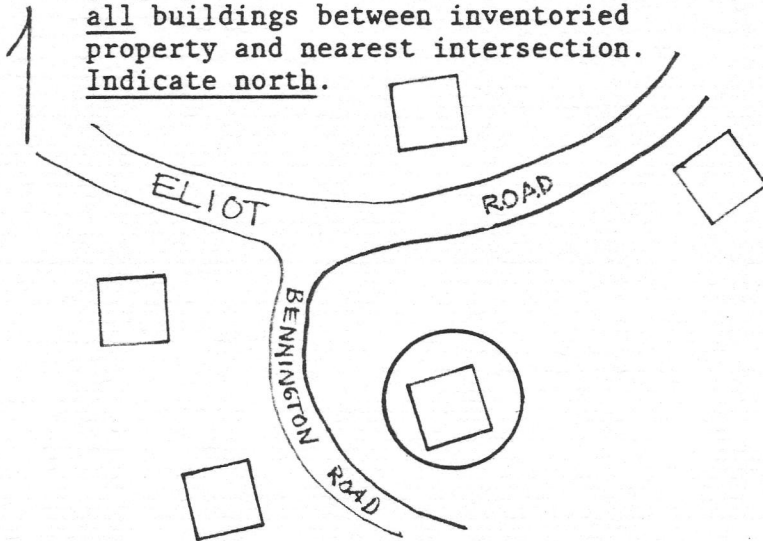
Present residential
Original residential

DESCRIPTION:

Year c. 1900 1900
Source Minute Man, Sept. 21, 1900
directory research

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Style Colonial Revival

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric clapboards

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) one-story wing added to the right side (date unknown)

Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 1.87 A.

Setting Suburban residential street of substantial houses of similar construction date; the north side of Munroe Hill.

Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

A large house with broad gambrel roof, this building is embellished with classical details such as Ionic columns on the porch, modillions, a balustrade with urns above the porch, and three pedimented dormers. The central has a broken scroll pediment with a finial ornament. A very broad elliptical fanlight marks the entrance.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The house was built by Thomas Cunningham Sias, a treasurer in Boston c. 1900. Next owners were the Prestons, who built a large addition on the right hand side.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, Volume II, p. 618. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

1906 atlas

1899 Directory

1906 Directory

Personal communication from Anne Blackwell.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
4 BENNINGTON RD.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

A detailed description of this house appeared in the *Lexington Minute-Man* on September 21, 1900 and reads as follows:

Mr. Thomas C. Sias, who has resided for several years on Broadway, Arlington, has, with his wife and four children, taken up their residence in a handsome and spacious new home just completed on Mt. Vernon, Lexington. The house is genuine colonial in style, simple and dignified in character and essentially convenient and home-like. It overlooks a wide expanse of country, faces south and is placed on a high elevation which commands a fine view in almost every direction. The architect planned the house after the ideas and drawings of Mr. Sias and there is, therefore, no little individuality about the place, as well as many useful and convenient innovations. It is a large house containing fifteen rooms, besides two bath rooms, a spacious reception hall and a large corridor on the second floor, from which the chambers open, and a small room containing a stationary ice chest which is filled from the outside. The kitchen is decidedly unique. It is furnished with an electric range and the room is ventilated by a flue open to the roof to carry away the odors of cooking with the heat. The sink is all open plumbing and the section of the room it occupies has the face of the wall set with white enameled tiles and the floor with red paving tiles. These few details show how complete the house is in every department. There are seven open fireplaces, with unusually handsome designs for the chimney pieces, the owner taking for his guide the old Tichenor mansion for his wood work finish. The large hall is spanned by an arch which is handsome in design and finish, as is the staircase with its lovely old spindle work and gracefully carved mahogany banister. The finish of the hall and parlor are in white enamel, which finish is also used with pleasing effect in the chambers. The library is a large and dignified room in a prevailing tone of a dark, antique green. The room is paneled, while mantels, bookcases, etc. are in a mahogany finish, which, with the green of the walls and furnishings, contrast with great African rugs in dull reds. A tone of yellow prevails in the parlor in pleasing contrast with the gilt of a large antique mirror over the mantel and the enameled woodwork. A striped red paper is in striking contrast to the elaborate white finish in the dining room, which has a low wainscot, with inviting cabinets and cupboards either side of the mantel, giving that side of the room, with its blue plates on a high shelf, a decidedly picturesque appearance. There is a massive mahogany sideboard which is a fit occupant for this room. A man's fancy will at once be captivated by the "den". This little private room of the master of the house has a finish of black oak shown in a high paneling, a hooded fire place, which is faced with field stone, and quaint cabinets set in the wall. Mexican Indian rugs, antlers and other adornments give the room a pleasing masculine air which is cheery and inviting. There is a sewing room just across from the den, fitted up with every convenience. Several of the numerous sleeping apartments have open fire places, while the paper and wood work are dainty and the rooms light, airy and inviting abodes for the sweet restorative of nature. In the bath rooms every modern device is used, while the fittings are of handsome, graceful designs all indicating comfort and cleanliness. There are no carpets on the floors, all of which are hard pine and covered with magnificent oriental rugs! In furnishings, as far as has been possible, antique pieces, especially of the colonial period, have been used, so that the effect of the interior is peculiarly harmonious and in good style.

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

Nor was the beauty of the property limited to its architecture. An article in the paper on August, 5, 1905 describes in detail the old-fashioned gardens to the rear which included hollyhocks, bachelor buttons and sweet peas, for which Mr. Sias was awarded a prize at a Horticultural Show exhibit.

In July 1910 the property was sold to Mr. Elwyn G. Preston of Woburn. The paper notes: "Mr. Preston is married and has four boys. The family is at present at a summer resort, but will probably take up their residence here early in September. At one time Mr. Preston was connected in an official way with the Boston Chamber of Commerce, but is now the treasurer of the R.H. White co., of Boston. Some years ago Mr. Preston resided in Arlington and was prominent in the Pleasant Street Cong. church where he was highly regarded and won many friends" (*Lexington Minute-Man*, July 16, 1910). Elwyn Preston was still occupying the house in 1942. The directory lists his occupation as Vice President and Treasurer of S.S. Pierce Co. in Boston.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Lexington Directories, various dates.
Lexington Minute-Man, September 21, 1900, August 5, 1905, July 16, 1910.
U.S. Census, 1910, 1920.

Supplement prepared by:
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